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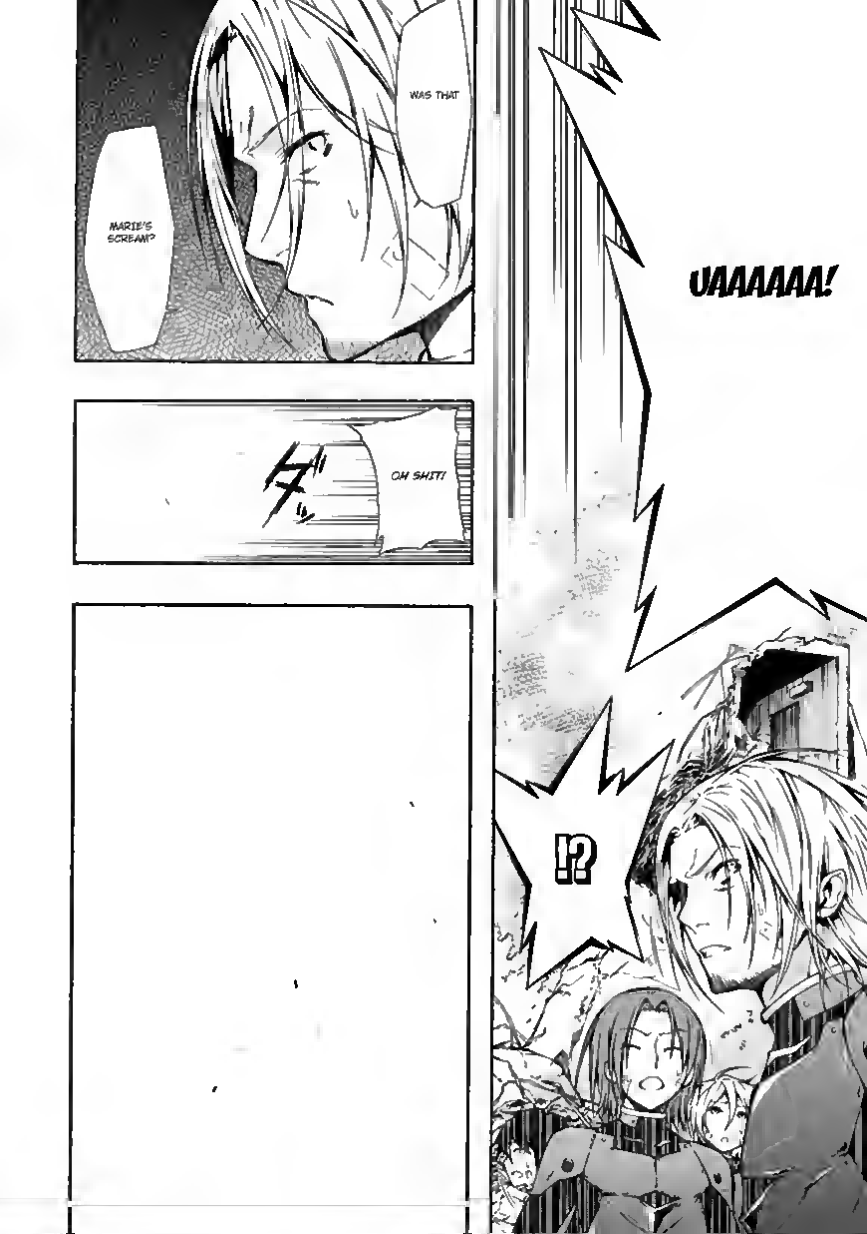
CHAPTER 16
HEIDIMARIE HEIDEGGER
クラスメート、上村ユウカはこう言った。
原作／桜井慎　作画／川上真樹
■最新単行本3巻、絶賛発売中//■
I could...
HEIDIMARIE'S "MEMORIES" OF THE DAYS LONG GONE...
never do things right


WAS THAT
MARIE'S SCREAM?
OH SHIT!
AAAAAA!
!?

SEE?
YOU ARE HERE
WHAAA?
WHA
TO KILL ME, AREN'T YOU?
EHH?
UGH!
AHH!

MAR—

MARIE?!

A CHILD?
HAA..
HAA..
HAA..
UGH
UHHHH!
WHAT
HAPP—

AHH..

AHHHHH!
WHAT'S WRONG?!
HEY, MARIE!
!
YOUR SHOULDER...
THAT KID DID IT RIGHT?
CALM DOWN, MARIE! WE'LL TREAT YOU!
GUAAAA...
MARIE!
AHHHHH!
TCH!

CAPTAIN.
EH...?
GET IT TREATED RIGHT NOW!
DO YOU WANT TO DIE HERE?!
CAPTAIN!

IT'S OKAY
YOU ARE SAFE WITH ME. DON'T THINK TOO MUCH ABOUT IT

I... I WASN'T GOING TO SHOOT HER!
IT'S NOT THAT!

IT'S ALL RIGHT
IT'S JUST...
I WAS REALLY SCARED...
I DIDN'T WANT TO KILL HER.

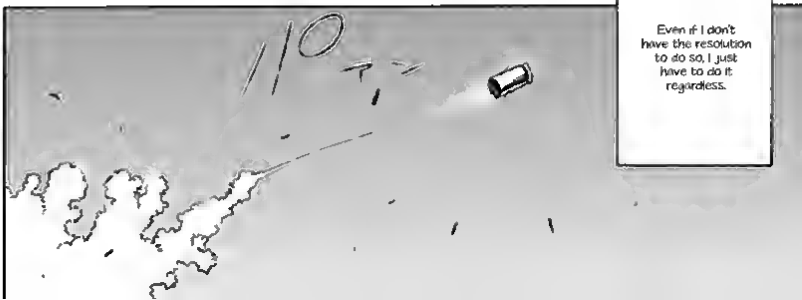
YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG
YOU WERE JUST PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM THE ENEMY THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT
PROTECTING MYSELF...
FROM THE ENEMY?
CAPTAIN! THAT'S JUST...
I MEAN...
ON THE BATTLEFIELD
IT'S EITHER KILL OR BE KILLED

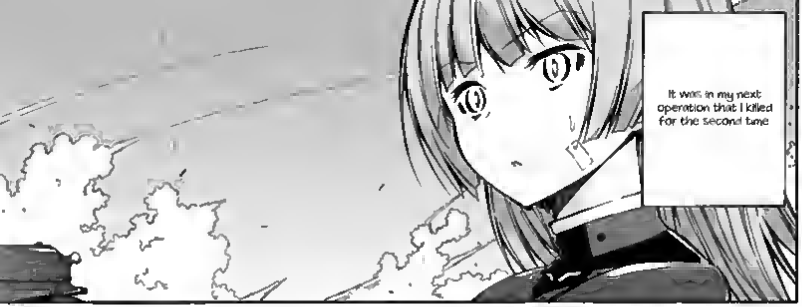
How foolish of me. I'm not ready to die at all.
I didn't even have the courage to kill her. It was just my reflexes taking over my own fear...
YOU SURVIVED THAT BATTLE. DON'T THROW AWAY YOUR LIFE SO QUICKLY
AND FOR THAT KID'S SAKE TOO
UWAAA
UWAAAA...
YOU WERE JUST UNLUCKY...
BUT I'M SURE THAT YOU CAN LEARN A THING OR TWO FROM THIS.

.....
CAPTAIN.
THIS IS HOW LIFE IS ON THE FRONTLINES.
WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING BUT TO ACCEPT IT

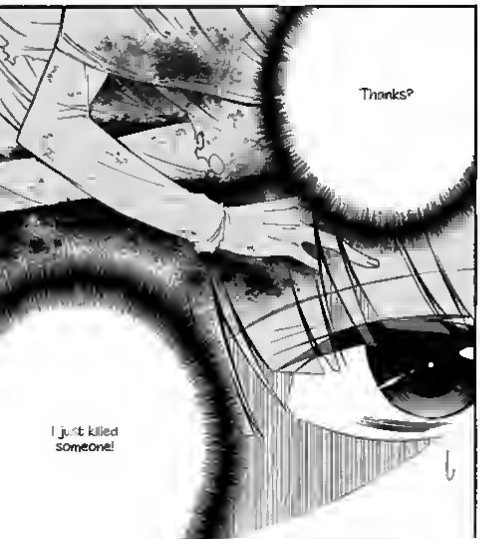
I'll just have to accept it!

This is reality.
He's right.


Even if I don't have the resolution to do so, I just have to do it regardless.


It was in my next operation that I killed for the second time

I grieved that child's death yet I easily pulled the trigger
Compared to that little girl before, I killed him without any remorse.


Thanks?
I just killed someone!

THANKS, MARIE-CHAN!
I DIDN'T SEE HIM COMING AT ALL!
.....
Ha Ha

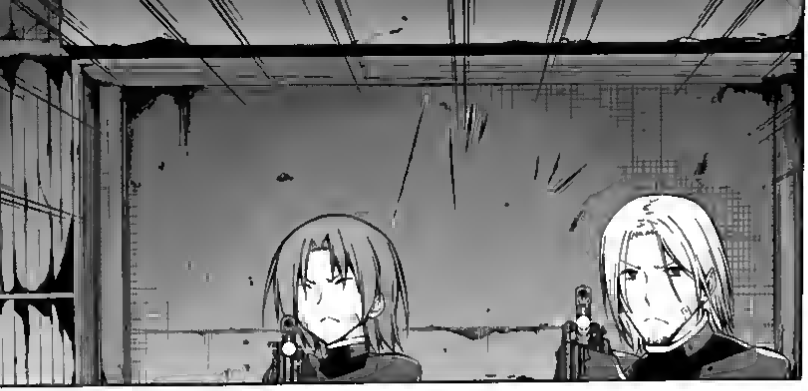
I found it at last,
a place where I belong.
No that's not it!
I was just protecting my comrades from danger!
There's nothing wrong about this!

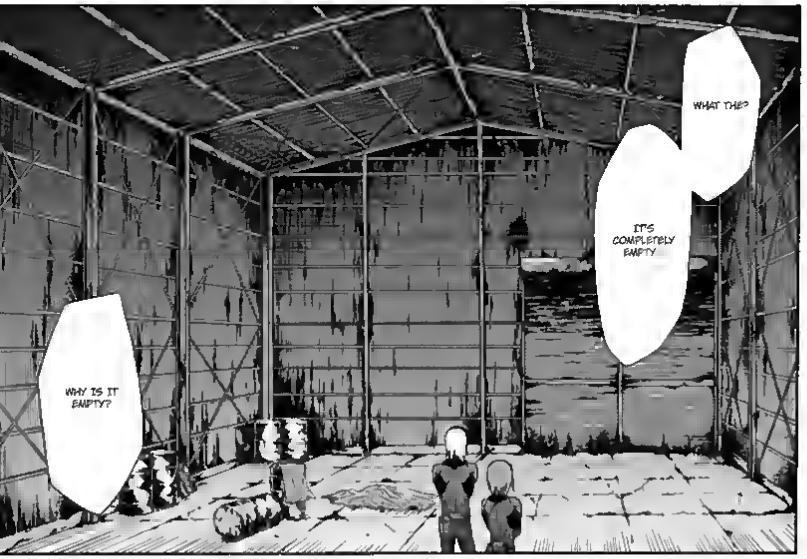
It was one battle after another

Killing all enemy soldiers and surviving each encounter was everything to me.
I casted aside all unnecessary thoughts and kept on fighting for the sake of my comrades and to protect the place I belonged

Yes, I had the talent for this kind of thing...
I became adept at both close-quarters and long-range combat.

A talent for killing




WHAT THE?
IT'S COMPLETELY EMPTY
WHY IS IT EMPTY?

SHIT! AMBUSH!
WAS OUR INTEL ABOUT THIS LOCATION BEING THEIR FOOD STORAGE INCORRECT?

!!

SHIT! IT'S A GEAR!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO, CAPTAIN?!
I DON'T KNOW! NO HUMAN BEING COULD DESTROY ONE!
WE'LL RETREAT FOR NOW!

HEY, YOU PIECE OF JUNK!
COME AT ME!
I'LL BE THE DECOY WHILE I HAVE ITS ATTENTION! RUN AWAY AS FAST AS YOU CAN!
CAPTAIN!

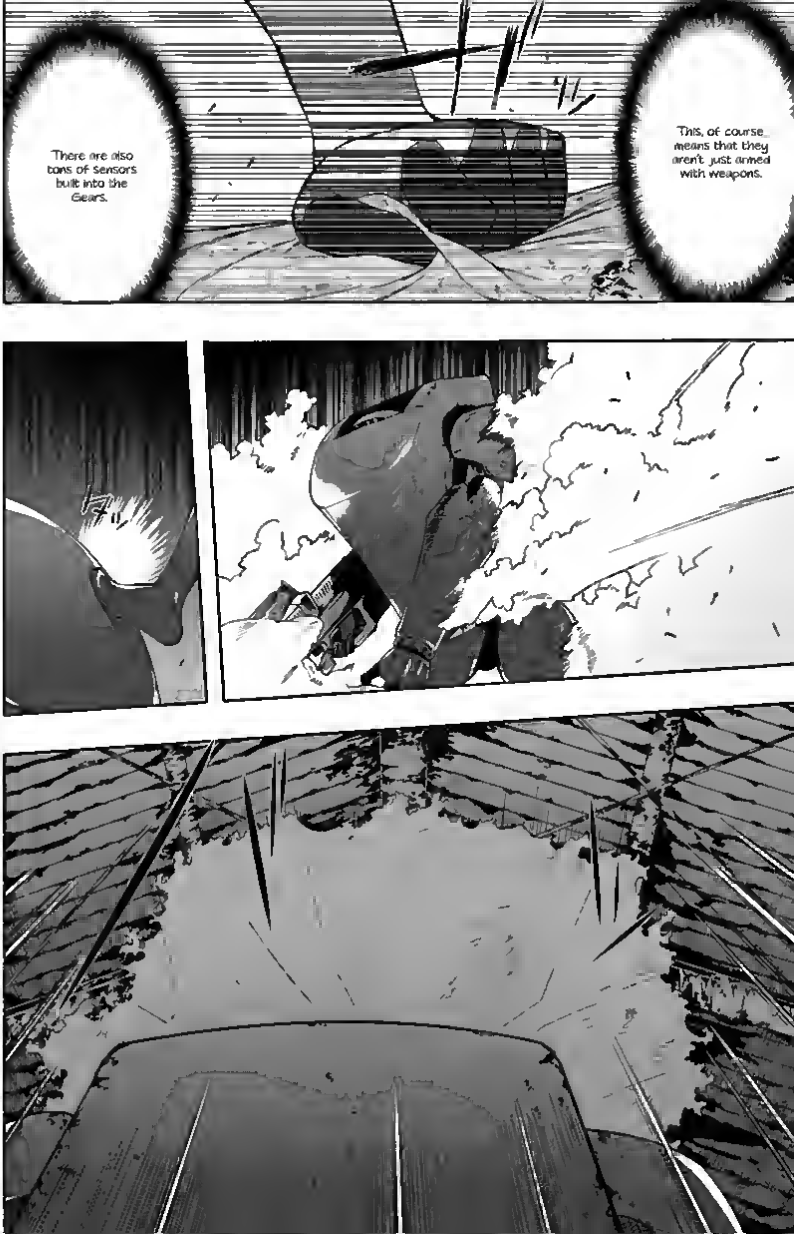
IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR AIM?
THAT WASN'T EVEN CLOSE!
SHIT!
DAMN!

MARIE?!

I'm sure that I can do something about it.
It's the same model as our own unit.

Its capabilities are ultimately controlled by humans.

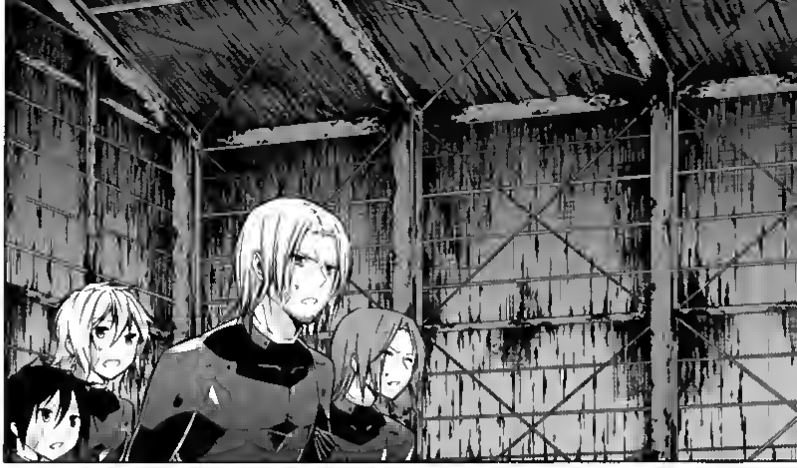
I can't penetrate the armor with my gun.
If that is the case...
I see. It's one of the recently manufactured Gears designed to fight against other Gears.


There are also tons of sensors built into the Gears.
This, of course, means that they aren't just armed with weapons.

And that would also affect the pilot too.

probably didn't expect to have his vision impaired like this.
The pilot, ready to swiftly hunt us down in this Gear
Since Gears are usually attacked from a distance, he must've been surprised to be counter-attacked with close combat instead
Now it is just a matter of one more shot...
Just as I thought, the moving parts are fragile.

カン
カラン



I was trying to say it with a smile.
MARIE...
IS EVERYONE OKAY?
YOU ARE
At first, I only did it because it was unavoidable
That reason alone convinced me it was fine to kill.
However, in the end, I only killed another human being because I had to.
I wanted to protect my comrades.
CAPTAIN? IT'S DANGEROUS HERE.
WE SHOULD WITHDRAW—
cough
If I annihilated the enemy,
I'm sure no one would ever have to fight again.

.....
EH?
MARIE-CHAN!?
WAS IT FROM THE BATTLE EARLIER?!
NO, I DON'T THINK SO...
GET YOURSELF TOGETHER, MARIE!
There was a wound on my body that never healed.

It re-opens from time to time due to the unhygienic conditions on the battlefield.
I know it would also happen if I push my body beyond its limits.

I sacrificed many things in exchange for strength.

Emotions, mind, pain, ability to feel... basically anything that is considered useless in battle.

In the deepness level of my consciousness, I thought to myself—

"It was for the best."

Now I won't have to
kill another human being again...

DOESN'T IT MEAN THAT YOU WERE KILLED BY THAT CHILD AFTER ALL?
THEN...
THERE WERE NO POSSIBILITY OF CURING ME.
ANYTHING AFTER THAT ARE BLURRED IN MY MEMORIES
.....
.....
INSTEAD OF A HOSPITAL I WAS BROUGHT TO A RESEARCH FACILITY
THERE I OVERHEARD A CONVERSATION THAT I FOUND DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND
SOMETHING ABOUT EXTRACTING DATA FROM MY BRAIN
AND USING IT TO FURTHER THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEARS AND OTHER NEW WEAPONS

BUT HERE I AM...
ALIVE. INSIDE THE BODY OF A ROBOT
IT WAS A VERY ABRUPT CONVERSATION.
SO I THOUGHT THAT IT MUST'VE BEEN A HALLUCINATION
HOLD ON.
!!
WHAT?
YOU ARE MISUNDERSTANDING SOMETHING HERE
YOU WERE A ROBOT FROM THE START

WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
UMM.

AH! THAT'S RIGHT!
I COM-PLETELY FORGOT ABOUT IT!

I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT THIS WORLD

IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE, BUT PLEASE LISTEN CAREFULLY

IS THAT TRUE?
SO.
ARE YOU SAYING
THAT THE ONLY HUMAN BEING LIVING IN THE WORLD IS YOU, KAMIMURA YUUKA
AND THAT I'M A ROBOT CREATED FOR THE SAKE OF THIS EXPERIMENT
ARE FAKE?
THAT ALL OF MY MEMORIES

YOUR MEMORIES ARE CERTAINLY REAL
IT'S JUST THAT THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF IT BEING A SETTING GIVEN BY THE SUPERVISORS.
BUT...
WHAT ABOUT THE CONVERSATION I HEARD REGARDING THE EXTRACTION OF DATA FROM MY BRAIN?

WELL, ANYTHING GOES WITH THAT SUPERVISOR
BUT I DO THINK THEY COULD DO ANYTHING TO A HUMAN BRAIN AS WELL

IT COULD BE
SOMETHING THAT GOES FROM ROBOT TO ROBOT...
NOT FROM HUMAN TO ROBOT

CAN YOU REMEMBER THE CONTENTS OF THAT CONVERSATION MORE CLEARLY?
.....
THERE COULD BE ANOTHER CLUE WE CAN PICK UP ON.

?
YONEKURA... EKO?
YONEKURA EKO...
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THIS MEMORY...?
FAMILY OF NO I LIVE ALONE?
SECOND YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL... EXCELS IN SPORTS.

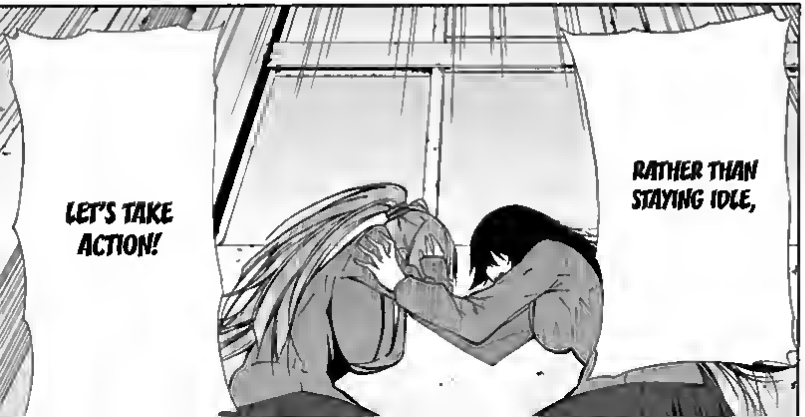
I'M A SOLDIER OF THE UNION ARMY.....
YOU'RE WRONG...
THAT MIGHT BE YOUR SETTING IN THIS WORLD
THEN WHAT WAS I...
WHAT IS THIS
WHAT?
UGH
KAMI-MURA?

THAT'S ENOUGH!
!!?
!?
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
.....!
HA!
THAT WAS ALL BASED ON MERE SPECULATION!
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE WORRIED ABOUT!

WELL, I DO UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL.
IT WOULD BE RATHER STRANGE IF THERE WAS SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T FEEL A THING AFTER HAVING THEIR OWN EXISTENCE QUESTIONED

YOU CAN STILL REMEMBER SOME OF YOUR MEMORIES IN DETAIL!
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S BETTER TO CHECK IF ANY OF IT IS TRUE?

HOWEVER,
THERE IS NO PROOF THAT IT WAS FAKE THE ENTIRE TIME!


LET'S TAKE ACTION!
RATHER THAN STAYING IDLE,

SO LET'S GO TOGETHER
OUTSIDE THAT WALL
TO FIND THE TRUTH BEHIND THIS IRRATIONAL WORLD
TO BE CONTINUED
Soon